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PROGRESS REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ON STANDBY ARRANGEMENTS FOR PEACEKEEPING

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The present report is submitted in pursuance of the Security Council's request that I report, at least once a year, on the progress made on standby arrangements with Member States concerning their possible contribution to United Nations peacekeeping operations (S/PRST/1994/22). It covers developments since the submission of my previous report on the subject on 10 November 1995 (S/1995/943).

II. CONCEPT

2. The concept of standby arrangements for peacekeeping operations remains as described in detail in my previous report. In brief, its purpose is to have a precise understanding of the forces and other capabilities a Member State will have available at an agreed state of readiness, should it agree to contribute to a peacekeeping operation. Such resources may include military units, individual civilian and military personnel (e.g., police, military observers), specialized services, equipment and other capabilities. The key element in the system of standby arrangements is the exchange of detailed information to facilitate planning and preparation for both the participating Member States and the United Nations.

III. CURRENT STATUS

3. I am pleased to report that further progress has been made since my previous report. Last year, I reported that 47 Member States had confirmed their willingness to provide standby resources totalling some 55,000 personnel that could, in principle, be called upon. As of 30 November 1996, 62 Member States have now made such a confirmation, involving a total of some 80,000 personnel.

4. The participating Member States are: Argentina, Australia, Austria, Bangladesh, Belarus, Belgium, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Chad,

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Czech Republic, Denmark, Egypt, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Guatemala, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Italy, Jordan, Kazakstan, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Malaysia, Myanmar, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nigeria, Norway, Pakistan, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Senegal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Sweden, Syrian Arab Republic, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Five Member States, Austria, Denmark, Ghana, Jordan and Malaysia, have formalized their standby contributions through a memorandum of understanding.

5. The resources involved are depicted in annex I to the present report. The total of 80,000 includes elements of different sizes, varying from infantry battalions to individual military observers, and cover the whole range of components envisaged for peacekeeping operations. The bulk of resources consist of infantry; there continues to be a need for additional resources to complement that number of infantry with the necessary logistic support, especially in the areas of sealift/airlift, communications, multi-role logistics, transport, health services, engineering, mine-clearing and transport utility aircraft. There is also a need for more civilian police personnel. The Secretariat will continue its discussions to seek the broadest possible participation by Member States as well as to arrive at a proper mix of troops and supporting units.

6. Standby arrangements also cover civilian resources provided by Governments for peacekeeping operations. Little progress has been achieved so far in this field. However, the Secretariat has recently observed a growing interest of Governments in contributing civilian resources and services which, in some cases, substitute for military resources. One clear example is the use of civilian organizations providing medical support in peacekeeping operations.

7. The Secretariat continued to expand its database with detailed information from the participating Governments. Such information includes, first of all, information on the specific capabilities of the resources covered by the standby arrangements. This information is needed at an early stage of planning for a peacekeeping operation to establish which units could be called upon to perform the expected tasks. At later stages of planning, the Secretariat will require more detailed information, such as the response time for each individual unit, any political or material preconditions, period of self-sufficiency, level of equipment, probable port of departure, total surface/volume/weight, number and types of vehicles, number of containers, information on particularly large or heavy items, and information on dangerous cargo (e.g., ammunition), and any specific handling instructions. This information is required to help the Secretariat to establish the requirements of peacekeeping forces and of individual units, in planning sea/airlift provisions and addressing any deficiencies in the composition and equipment of peacekeeping units. Of the 62 participating Member States, 41 have provided information on specific capabilities. The information available under the standby arrangements proved most helpful in the planning for and subsequent deployment to peacekeeping operations in Haiti, Angola and the former Yugoslavia, in particular the United Nations Transitional Administration in Eastern Slavonia, Baranja, and Western Sirmium (UNTAES).

IV. RAPID DEPLOYMENT

8. An important objective of the standby arrangements system is to tackle the problem of the often long period between a decision by the Security Council to establish an operation and the arrival of troops and equipment in the mission area. A key element in this regard is response time, defined as the period between the time the request to provide resources is made and the time these resources are ready for airlift/sealift to the mission area.

9. The Secretariat has registered response times according to the declared individual capacities of Member States. The declared response times for confirmed standby resources vary from 7 days to more than 90 days. Some 40 per cent of the standby resources have a response time of 30 days or less; 16 per cent have a response time of 60 days; 3 per cent have a response time of 90 days; the remaining 41 per cent have a response time of over 90 days. The grouping of resources with their response time is shown in annex II to the present report.

10. This implies that a significant proportion of the resources in the standby arrangements is at a high level of readiness. However, this in itself does not give the United Nations a capacity for rapid deployment. It should be borne in mind that the speed of deployment is contingent on several other factors, including political approval and support at the national level, availability of airlift/sealift, a capacity for mission management and logistic sustainment in the field, as well as the conclusion of the necessary administrative procedures.

11. In this regard, I draw attention to the progress made in the reform of the procedures for determining reimbursement to Member States for contingent-owned equipment, in particular, the elaboration of a contribution agreement for the provision of personnel, equipment and services in support of peacekeeping operations.[1] The introduction of these new procedures, which include arrangements for the self-sustainment of troops, is expected to result in a decrease of the level of logistic support to be provided by the United Nations. Currently, the United Nations requires units to deploy in the mission with the means to sustain themselves for a minimum period of 60 days, in order to allow the United Nations adequate time to establish its logistic support capacity.

12. The above-mentioned contribution agreement should, in principle, be signed before the deployment of the resources to the mission area. In this connection, I believe that a significant amount of time could be saved if preliminary contribution agreements were to be drawn up in advance between the Secretariat and participating Member States on the basis of information made available under the standby arrangements system. These preliminary agreements could then be finalized quickly before deployment.

13. An important effort by the United Nations to facilitate rapid deployment is the development of a rapidly deployable mission headquarters (RDMHQ). In the past, military contingents and other components arrived in the mission area and operated for extended periods without a proper mission headquarters. To overcome this problem, and in keeping with the recommendation of the General Assembly contained in resolution 50/30 of 6 December 1995, I have decided to establish within the Secretariat the skeleton of a RDMHQ. In brief, this RDMHQ would enable the United Nations to deploy quickly a cohesive team of essential

civilian and military personnel to the mission area. This would ensure that the deployment and initial phases of a peacekeeping operation receive the necessary management and guidance. The RDMHQ would consist of earmarked personnel currently in the Secretariat, personnel nominated by Governments who would remain in their home country until deployment, and a small core of personnel for functions which will require full-time attention. The RDMHQ could remain in the mission area for the first three to six months, during which time it would be replaced, in a gradual fashion, by a mission headquarters staffed by personnel recruited for that purpose. It is hoped that the RDMHQ will be functional in early 1997.

V. EQUIPMENT

14. In principle, all units made available under the standby arrangements should be fully equipped. This, however, may not be achievable for all contributing countries. It is therefore important to provide information on the level and status of equipment at the time a standby arrangement is agreed upon. This would enable the Secretariat to identify any gaps and to seek solutions to fill them as early as possible.

15. In this regard, I should emphasize that the Secretariat has only a very limited capacity to maintain equipment made available by Governments to the United Nations and to train personnel in its use. I have therefore suggested that partnerships be established between Governments that need equipment and those ready to provide it. Such bilateral partnerships can be made part of a standby arrangement with either one or both Governments. Preferably, such partnerships should be concluded directly between Governments and include such aspects as training and maintenance. The new procedures for determining reimbursement for contingent-owned equipment allow Member States to take the lead in providing support to contingents from another country, which support is subject to reimbursement by the United Nations under pre-established conditions and rates. Alternatively, the Secretariat may identify, from the resources in its database, a possible match of personnel with equipment and suggest to Governments that they set up a partnership.

VI. FINAL REMARKS

16. There has been encouraging progress in the number of Member States participating in the standby arrangements system. However, the need remains to broaden the geographical base of available resources as well as to achieve a proper mix of troops and supporting units. There has also been progress, albeit modest, towards a rapid deployment capability. I welcome, in particular, the efforts by Member States to increase the military readiness of troops earmarked for peacekeeping duties. This said, I should like to underscore that rapid deployment is conditional on several other factors, highlighted in the report, deserving of equal attention. The Secretariat, for its part, will continue its dialogue with Member States to address these issues.

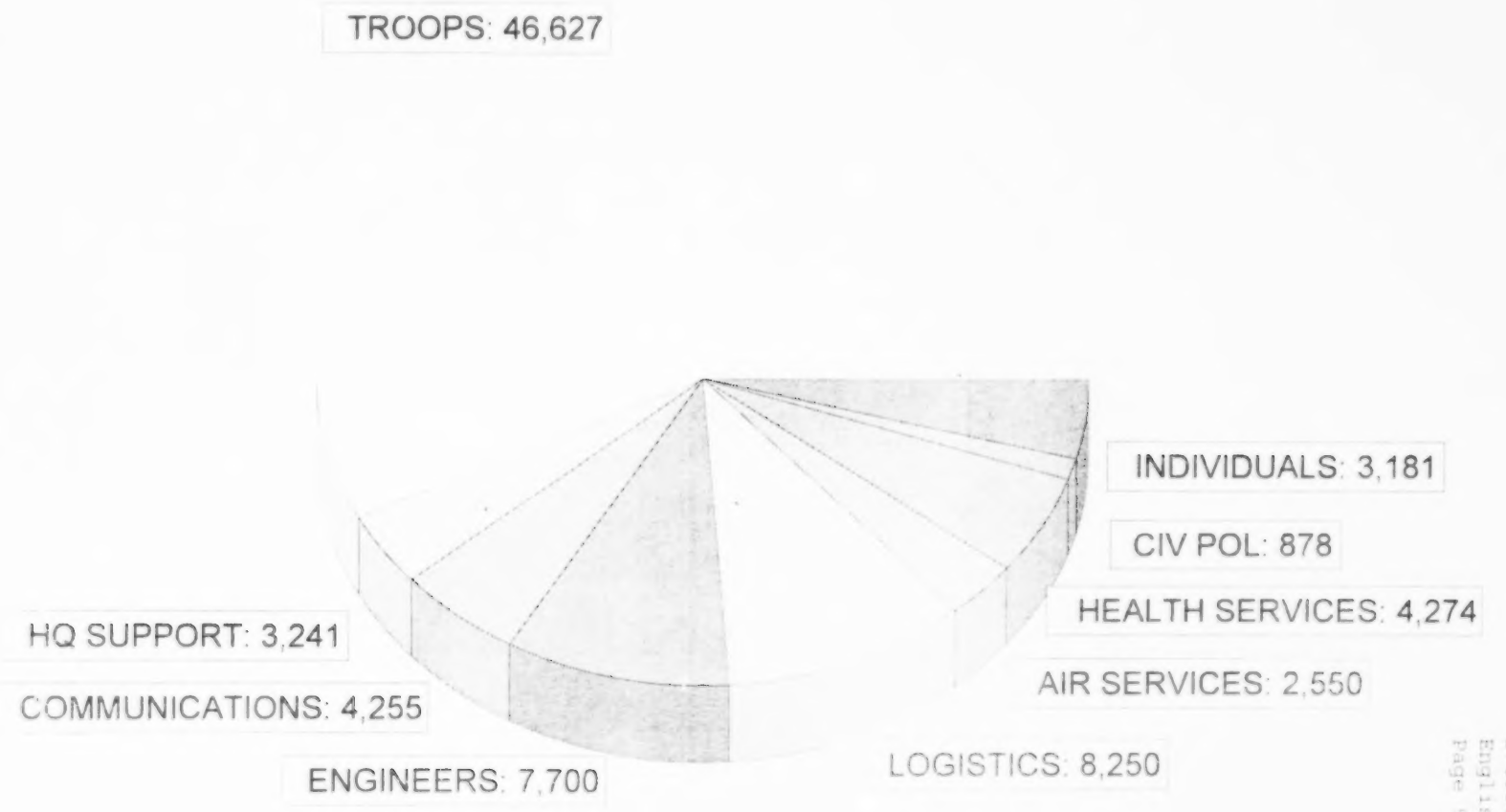
Notes

[1] A/50/995, annex.

Annex I

SBA RESOURCES POOL

(breakdown by functions)



Annex II

GROUPING OF SBA RESOURCES POOL

(by response time)